

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 SAJ-01 NIC-01 SAM-01

IO-14 CIEP-03 AID-20 DRC-01 /171 W

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2201

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, SK

SUBJECT: PRC STATEMENT ON SIKKIM

REF: HONG KONG 9802

SUMMARY: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SEPTEMBER 11 ISSUED A STRONG CONDEMNATION OF INDIA'S "ANNEXATION" OF SIKKIM. THE STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE FIRST OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT OF CHINA'S POSITION ON SIKKIM AND ON THE MOST RECENT INDIAN ACTION. IT INDICATES PEKING'S VIEW OF NEW DELHI AS A WILLING AND KEY ADJUNCT IN THE FURTHERANCE OF MOSCOW'S HEGE-
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MONIC DESIGNS ON THE AREA AND UNDERSCORES PEKING'S APPARENT

AND HEIGHTENED CONCERN OVER ITS PRECEPTION OF STEPPED-UP SOVIET TROUBLE-MAKING IN SOUTH ASIA. THE STATEMENT, HOWEVER, DOES NOT GO BEYOND STRONG VERBAL SUPPORT OF THE SIKKIMESE PEOPLE, REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE THE "ANNEXATION," AND A WARNING THAT SUCH ACTION WILL "COME TO NO GOOD END." IN VIEW OF CHINA'S CURRENT INTEREST IN COUNTERING WHAT THE PRC PERCEIVES AS SOVIET ENCROACHMENT INTO THE REGION, PEKING WILL PROBABLY INTENSIFY HER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TIES WITH OTHER SOUTH ASIAN NATIONS, WHICH PROBABLY ALSO VIEW THE INDIAN ACTION WITH SOME ALARM. END SUMMARY.

1. PRC FOREIGN MINISTRY SEPTEMBER 11 ISSUED A STRONGLY-WORDED STATEMENT CONDEMNING INDIA'S "ANNEXATION" OF SIKKIM. THE OFFICIAL BLAST AT INDIA FOLLOWS A SPATE OF PRC MEDIA REPORTS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS (WR 36 AND 37) CRITICAL OF NEW DELHI'S MOVES TO MAKE SIKKIM AN ASSOCIATE STATE.

2. ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, THE FIRST PUBLICLY-RELEASED AND OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE PRC POSITION, "THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT SOLEMNLY STATES THAT IT ABSOLUTELY DOES NOT RECOGNIZE INDIA'S ILLEGAL ANNEXATION OF SIKKIM AND THAT IT FIRMLY SUPPORTS THE PEOPLE OF SIKKIM IN THEIR JUST STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY."

3. RAISING THE FAMOUS "BULLY" THEME, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CHARGES THAT THE "FLAGRANT" INDIAN ACTION WAS CARRIED OUT IN DISREGARD OF THE WISHES OF THE CHOGYAL AND THE SIKKIMESE PEOPLE, A THEME AMPLIFIED IN RECENT PRC MEDIA REPORTS. ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, "HAVING INHERITED THE MANTLE OF IMPERIALISM," INDIA HAS "ALWAYS PURSUED A COLONIALIST POLICY TOWARD SIKKIM." HOWEVER, CHINA CONTENDS THAT INDIA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN EMBOLDENED BY HER RECENT FIRST NUCLEAR TEST AND "THOUGHT IT COULD DO WHATEVER IT PLEASED WITH ITS NEIGHBORS."

4. THE OFFICIAL PRC STATEMENT, HOWEVER, CLEARLY REVEALS AND UNDERSCORES PEKING'S HEIGHTENED APPREHENSION ABOUT WHAT THE PRC PERCEIVES AS STEPPED-UP SOVIET TROUBLE-MAKING IN THE AREA AND STRONGER INDO-SOVIET TIES. THE TEXT EXPLICITLY POINTS TO MOSCOW'S LONE SUPPORT FOR INDIA'S "SHAMELESS ACT" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND FOR "INDIRA GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT" AS UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE THAT SOVIET REVISIONIST SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM IS "THE BOSS BEHIND THE SCENE AS WELL AS THE ABETTOR OF INDIAN EXPANSIONISM." (PRC MEDIA COMMENTS HAVE TERMED THE SOVIETS AS THE "FEROCIOUS ENEMY" OF THE SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES.) AN NCNA REPORT OF SEPTEMBER 11 REPLAYED STATEMENTS FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHICH ASSERTED THAT INDIRA GANDHI'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN INDO-SOVIET LINKS IS "NOT A GOOD OMEN"

AND PROBABLY A PRELUDE TO FURTHER TROUBLES FOR THE REGION.
(WE NOTE THAT THE INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IS CURRENTLY IN
MOSCOW FOR TALKS WITH BREZHNEV.) WITH INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH
MOSCOW APPARENTLY IN GOOD ORDER, PEKING HAS GIVEN CLEAR NOTICE
THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS WHICH HAD
WARMED SLIGHTLY LAST SPRING HAVE GREATLY DETERIORATED.

5. ALTHOUGH THE STATEMENT WARNS THAT "EXPANSIONISM WILL COME TO
NO GOOD END, IT PROVIDES NO EXPLICIT THREAT AND IMPLIES THAT THE
INDIAN ACTION WILL BE COUNTERED MAINLY BY SIKKIMESE OPPOSITION
TO INDIA AS WELL AS HOPEFULLY ADVERSE WORLD OPINION
AGAINST BOTH DELHI AND MOSCOW.

6. THE STRONG PRC STATEMENT IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY ATTRI-
BUTABLE TO LONG-TERM CHINESE SENSITIVITIES TOWARD INDIAN
ACTIVITIES IN HIMALAYAN BORDER STATES, CONCERNS THAT ARE
HEIGHTENED BY CHINA'S DESIRE TO COUNTER SOVIET INFLUENCE,
INCLUDING CLOSER INDO-SOVIET TIES, THROUGHOUT SOUTH ASIA.
WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT PRC WILL PROBABLY SEEK TO PLAY ON
FEARS OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA TO STRENGTHEN ITS OWN
BILATERAL TIES WITH COUNTRIES ON INDIA'S PERIPHERY.
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